

COMMUNICATION BARRIERS IN ENGLISH ENCOUNTERED BY IRREGULAR STUDENTS OF THE CAVITE STATE UNIVERSITY IN DISTANCE LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

Cavite State University shifted to flexible learning modality in 2020 due to COVID-19 pandemic. Irregular students in different English courses experienced difficulties while dealing with their academic tasks. With this, the study was generally conducted to determine the communication barriers in English faced by irregular students at the Cavite State University in distance learning. Specifically, it aimed to determine the academic profile of the participants as to academic program and college where they belong, their status of enrollment, and the English courses taken; identify the common examples and the types of communication barriers that they encountered in their English classes in distance learning; determine their coping mechanisms in their English classes during distance learning, and determine the significant differences on the barriers when the participants were grouped according to their respective colleges. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used in this study. A total of 119 participants were purposively and conveniently selected to answer the validated survey questionnaire. Data were analyzed using frequency and percentage distribution, weighted means, and Standard Deviation. Results revealed that physical/technical barrier was the most common type of communication barrier faced by the participants (40.79%). With a Standard Deviation of 0.81 and a computed p-value of 0.8446 which was found higher than the critical p-value of 0.05, no significant differences were found on the communication barriers after grouping the participants according to their respective colleges; hence, the null hypothesis was accepted. The participants also used different coping mechanisms in dealing with the barriers. With the findings, educational problems like these should immediately be addressed by the school administration to facilitate learning among the students.

Keywords: *communication barriers, distance learning, irregular students*

INTRODUCTION

Communication supports the exchange of information and knowledge, as well as the development of interpersonal relationships, making it a fundamental process. Based on Fatimayin (2018), communication has kept transmitting information in all places. With technological changes that have helped the world to become a global village, communication has become easier, faster, and possible through many different channels. Hence, it has an imperative role in society, such as family, business, work, and school. In the field of education, verbal and non-verbal communication among teachers and the students is a vital aspect to attain the objectives of learning. If this becomes effective, both the students and the teachers benefit and learn together.

However, the educational system has been shaken by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has affected practically all nations and countries. It has been considered a great health crisis. The first recorded case occurred in the Philippines on January 21, 2020, and with this, schools, businesses, and other sectors were forced to close and adapt to the new changes. With this, the educational system has been greatly altered. Students, instructors, and professors have been obliged to adjust to distance learning.

This crisis brings to light the (contact and lifesaving) issue of school closures, which keeps political officials on the job (allowing workers to work and maintaining the economy). Burgess and Siervesten (2020) cited that many families worldwide are experiencing extreme short-term disruption. Home education is a significant shock to parents' productivity and children's social lives and learning. With these problems, student tests are administered online, with a great deal of testing, errors, and insecurity for both. It is deemed important to note that these interruptions are not only short-term issues but may perhaps have a long-term impact on cohorts involving potentially increasing inequality.

Most of the institutions used distance learning by which learning is made between the teacher and

the student who are geographically separated during instruction. Quinones (2020) cited the three types of modalities in distance learning which include Modular Distance Learning (MDL), Online Distance Learning (ODL), and TV/Radio-based Instruction. Modular Distance Learning (MDL) enables students to use self-learning modules or SLMs in print or digital format. Online Distance Learning involves the teacher as a facilitator of learning by encouraging learners' active participation with different learning platforms and technologies accessible via the internet, such as Google Meet, Zoom, and Microsoft Teams, among others. On one hand, in TV/radio-based instruction, learning modules are transformed into video courses for television or into radio scripts for radio.

According to Alipio (2020) in Law (2021), the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) urged other higher education institutions in the Philippines to adapt distance learning strategies for their classrooms, such as the use of education technologies, to increase the academic term despite suspensions. Many other public and private tertiary institutions have adopted similar provisions for their courses; additionally, several student associations have urged CHED for suspension of mandatory online classes because of practical constrictions and well-being of most students.

With an increasing number of cases worldwide, electronic learning may be a viable alternative to continuing education while preventing the spread of the virus. In developing countries, e-learning has become a common mode of education delivery. Several developed countries have tried welcoming a new learning space. The Philippines, however, has faced struggles given the financial and acceptance considerations, limiting the learning space.

Based on UNESCO (2020), nearly 1.6 billion students, or 91 percent of the total student population, were affected during the peak of school closures. This figure is only one part of the equation, and the true impact on students will be known only in the coming months and years. A lack of information acquisition exacerbates the

problem. Many students who have been compelled out of school have seen their learning deteriorate or even vanish during their hiatus, a learning break that persists for more than 60 percent of students (UNESCO, 5 July 2020). This split would have already had a significant impact on young people in terms of possible lack of knowledge education.

Moreover, during the COVID-19 crisis, approximately 40 percent of the poorest countries struggled to aid at-risk learners, and historical evidence shows that education and gender gaps seem to be neglected in response to disease outbreaks. Domestic chores, particularly for girls, and the work required to run households or farms may also limit children's ability to learn. Furthermore, educational achievement inequities increase by the economic impact. If millions are pushed into extreme poverty, empirical evidence shows that children from the poorest quintiles are significantly less likely to complete primary and lower secondary education than those from the wealthiest quintile; in many Sub-Saharan countries, this difference can be more than 50 percentage points.

It is a fact that not all students can provide the learning equipment/gadgets necessary in education. Adapting to the quick changes in different educational institutions particularly at the onset of the pandemic became difficult. Students, particularly irregular students, were found to face numerous challenges in engaging and learning via synchronous and asynchronous modes. Students and teachers had to get used to a very different teaching and learning format, and parents were more involved than ever before in their children's learning processes, based on Garbe et al., (2020) as cited by Jaekel, Scheiter, and Göllner (2021).

Magsambol (2020) as cited in Mina, et al. (2021) mentioned that flexible learning (FL) remains the most practical instructional modality at the peak of COVID-19. It assures the continuity of inclusivity and accessibility of education when traditional modes of teaching are deemed impossible, such as during the event of national emergencies. Higher education institutions are free to choose

which learning mode is effective for them. Some would prefer online, pure modular, while others would use a hybrid of the two. The Cavite State University started using the flexible learning modality in 2020 at the onset of COVID-19 pandemic.

Since then, both synchronous and asynchronous modes have been utilized to facilitate learning amidst the situation. The curriculum shifted to distance mode of learning and all courses have been affected including the teaching of English courses and as observed, the learners. In particular, the irregular students have experienced difficulties while dealing with their academic tasks in distance learning.

A considerable distance apart in distance education may lead to obstacles; hence, students may experience stress, seclusion, and discomfort due to these restrictions. These impediments impact the learners' pleasure and the learners' ability to learn, learner performance and learning quality according to Berge (2013). Most of these barriers are brought on, at least in part, by poor communication.

For irregular students who have been both working and studying at the same time, and have been experiencing different health issues, as well, learning has become uneasy. After a few observations and short informal interviews, most of them mentioned that they have experienced communication barriers in their English courses. Anchored on Berge (2013), the study was conducted to identify the communication barriers faced by the irregular students in different English courses and their coping mechanisms in distance learning.

Objectives of the Study

The study was mainly conducted to determine the communication barriers in English encountered by irregular students at the Cavite State University in distance learning.

Specifically, the study aimed to:

1. determine the academic profile of the partici-

pants as to academic program and college where they belong, their status of enrollment, and the English courses taken;

2. identify the common examples and the types of communication barriers encountered by the participants;

3. identify the coping mechanisms of the irregular students, and

4. determine the significant differences on the barriers when the participants were grouped based on the college where they belong.

Hypothesis

Ho: There are no significant differences in the communication barriers encountered by the participants when they are grouped according to the college where they belong.

Theoretical Framework

The study dealt with the communication barriers encountered by the irregular students in their English classes in distance learning. One way by which the students learn the English language is through written and oral communication. However, there would always be instances that they find difficulties to learn various topics particularly that the mode of teaching and learning in the university during the pandemic was changed to distance learning. Communication between the teachers and the students has been greatly affected by the impact of COVID-19 pandemic. Classroom management particularly with the use of online meeting rooms have greatly hindered effective communication.

The following details on effective communication in distance learning were based on Osakwe (2009) and Daniel (2010) in Fatimayin (2018). In addition, communication barriers as discussed by Manlapaz (2020) and Berge (2013) are all presented in this section.

Osakwe (2009) made a study which focused on communication aspects as indicators of effective classroom engagement in his study. Findings re-

vealed that teachers' attitudes, knowledge base, communication skills, and successful classroom engagement were found to have a strong association. Communication barriers in the educational process manifest themselves in students' struggles to solve academic challenges, which harm their learning activity performance.

Similarly, for this particular study, the problems and challenges encountered by the irregular students of English were identified as to how they see learning and how they cope with the academic tasks in distance education.

With the study of Daniel (2010) in Fatimayin (2018), effective communication in distance learning includes good conversations, telephone calls, text messages, email messages, and the internet. The use of online platforms is also of great importance in the field of education. This involves the use of social media platforms like Facebook messenger and emails. Academic outputs requiring communication are made through reports, written letters, brochures, and the like.

In adherence to Daniel (2010) in Fatimayin (2018), the problems of the students in communication in distance learning such as poor internet connectivity and lack of knowledge in various online platforms were also identified.

Communication barriers arise in all organizations, be it specific, noise-related, environmental, and cultural differences and biased inside the business. Communication options have been broadened with world comprehensive web technologies, which have enhanced the chances for collaboration, context-aware issue resolution, and resource access.

Communication barriers are increasing or emerging in education as technology improves or expands in its capabilities and breadth worldwide. The desired communication is frequently disrupted and twisted, creating a state of misinterpretation and communication failure. It is indeed important to determine the types of communication barriers that hinder the students to learn the English language.

As mentioned by Manlapaz (2020), with the sudden shift to distance learning, teachers and learners were tested on their readiness in terms of resources which were considered as one of the barriers to learning. People do not have home-based internet connections due to geographical location or high number of users in households. Some teachers were seen to be hesitant of using digital ways of teaching; hence, both the teachers and the learners found difficulties in delivering and learning the lessons.

The same scenario was explored in this study. Resources used in distance education were identified. Problems such as poor internet connectivity and the geographical location of the irregular students were noted as part of the barriers they encountered in distance education.

As for this study, the types of communication barriers based on Berge (2013) that were encountered by the students were determined as well as their coping mechanisms in distance learning. He categorized the barriers into six aspects: contextual, collaboration, psychological, physical and technical, temporal, and social and cultural barriers.

Physical and technical barriers refer to distance between people and the technical problems encountered by the students or those involved in communication. Technical barriers may include availability of the internet, poor audio and video, and the like.

Social and cultural barriers include differences in understanding based on race, beliefs, and upbringing. This may include differences in the culture of the students and teachers coming from different regions.

Meanwhile, temporal barriers are those that are related to the difference in time. Poor postal system and delayed delivery of assignments may affect the students in preparing the required outputs. The same thing goes with students who come from a different time zone.

Collaboration barriers refer to the barriers that may affect people from different areas/places. With respect to distance learning, these refer to

the barriers that the students face while exchanging information through the online and offline modes of learning. This could be affected by other barriers such as technical barriers.

Psychological barriers are the barriers that affect the people mentally. In this study, these barriers were evident among the students who were having lesser time grasping the lessons due to several health and financial problems which were brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Lastly, contextual barriers are the barriers that refer to differences in the texts used by the communicators. These include the difference in the context that leads to less effective communication.

Relatively, these barriers in communication were all identified in this study. Those that pertain to the availability of the internet, poor audio, and video when attending online classes, poor postal system and delayed delivery of assignments which affected the students when working on their academic tasks, differences in local areas, the barriers such as mental, health, and financial problems brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, and some other differences among the learners and the teachers were all noted in this study.

Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 shows the flow of the study. Irregular students who are enrolled in English courses for A.Y. 2021-2022 were surveyed in this study. Their academic profile was identified, and the validated questionnaire was distributed. In addition, the communication barriers as classified by Berge (2013) were the basis to analyze the necessary data. Their coping mechanisms were also identified and the significant differences on the communication barriers encountered by the participants coming from different colleges were noted.

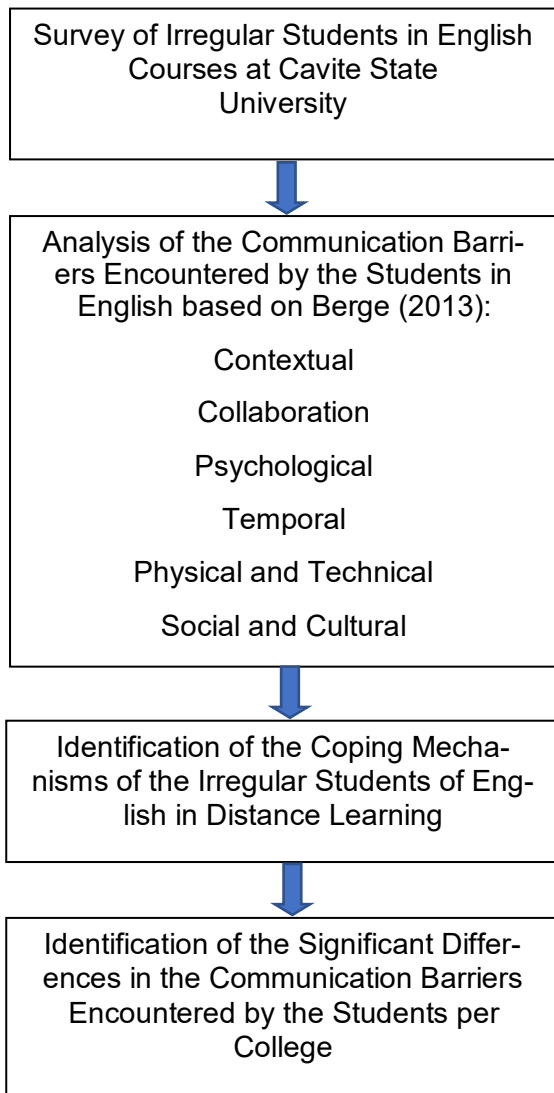


Figure 1. Research paradigm

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study used a descriptive design, employing both qualitative and quantitative analysis. Survey questionnaires were used to elicit the data. Quantitative data were elicited using statements that were rated via a Likert scale. The coping mechanisms of the participants in distance learning were recorded using an interview.

Participants of the Study

A total of 119 enrolled irregular students in English courses for A.Y 2021-2022 from nine colleges of the CvSU-Main Campus (College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), College of Economics, Management, and Development Studies (CEMDS), College of Veterinary Medicine, and Biomedical Science (CVMBS), College of Nursing (CoN), College of Criminal Justice (CCJ), College of Engineering and Information Technology (CEIT), College of Sports, Physical Education and Recreation (CSPEAR), College of Education (CED), and College of Agriculture, Food, Environment, and Natural Resources (CAFENR) at Cavite State University-Main Campus) served as research participants.

Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling and convenience sampling techniques were utilized in this study. As utilized in qualitative and mixed methods research, purposive sampling involves an iterative process of selecting research subjects rather than starting with a predetermined sampling frame (Robinson, 2014). Meanwhile, convenience sampling technique refers to the sample of the population that reflects those who were available at a moment in time (Baxter, 2015).

Purposive sampling technique was used in the selection of the participants from the different colleges of the CvSU-Main Campus. The criteria used in the selection include the academic program and college where they belong, their status of enrollment, and the English courses they took. As for the purpose of this study, those who were noted as irregular students in English classes were selected to be included in the list of the participants.

Convenience sampling technique was also used in the selection of the participants who were available and willing to participate in this study. The total population of irregular students enrolled during the Academic Year 2021 – 2022 in English was obtained from the Registrar's Office of the Cavite State University - Main Campus.

Research Instrument

A survey questionnaire on the communication barriers in English encountered by the irregular students of CvSU, that was validated by three experts, was administered. This was done with the use of Google Forms which include their academic profile and a checklist of examples of communication barriers. A Five-Point Likert Scale was used to determine the barriers to communication that irregular students encountered. A set of open-ended questions were provided to determine their coping mechanisms in distance learning.

Data Gathering Procedure

A letter of request was sent to the university registrar to obtain the total number of irregular students enrolled during the Academic Year 2021-2022. Another letter of request was prepared and given to the irregular students taking English courses. Letters were sent via email due to the pandemic. Data collection and analysis were treated with utmost confidentiality. The questionnaire was divided into four sections: (1) academic profile of the participants, (2) specific communication barriers encountered by the irregular students enrolled in their English courses, (3) types of communication barriers faced by the irregular students in English courses of Cavite State University-Main Campus in distance learning, (4) the ways by which irregular students in English courses deal with the communication barriers encountered in distance learning at Cavite State University.

A 5-point Likert Scale was used with questions that present the type of communication barrier encountered by the participants. The number of statements for all types was equal with one another. Following the scale, statements with scores ranging from 4.21-5.00 indicate that the participant highly believed that he/she faced the communication barriers in distance learning; thus, it was given a verbal interpretation of "Strongly Agree". Those statements with scores ranging from 3.41-4.20 mean that the participant only agreed that he/she faced the communication barrier(s) in distance learning. Meanwhile, those statements with scores ranging from 2.61-3.40

mean that he/she is doubtful of the six-communication barriers faced in distance learning; hence, the response was just "Neutral". Moreover, those which obtained scores ranging from 1.81-2.60 mean that the participant partially disagreed with the statements pertaining to the communication barriers in distance learning. Lastly, statements with scores ranging from 1.00-1.80 indicate that the participant strongly disagreed with the given entries on communication barriers in distance education.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were observed in this study. Only those participants who were willing to be involved in this research were surveyed and interviewed. Their profiles were also kept confidential and used for research purposes only.

Data Analysis

The following statistical tools were used in this study:

Frequency and percentage distribution, weighted means, and ranking were used to determine the communication barriers encountered by the irregular students in English courses of the Cavite State University - Main Campus in distance learning. Multiple responses given by the participants were tabulated and ranked. Data on their coping mechanisms were also identified and enumerated.

Meanwhile, to get the significant differences on the communication barriers faced by irregular students in English courses per college, Standard Deviation was used. There were academic courses without irregular students in English; hence, the analysis was done by comparing the students across colleges.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the academic profile of the participants and the descriptive statistical results and interpretations of the data on the communication barriers in English encountered by the irregular students at the Cavite State University. This also includes details on their coping mecha-

nisms in distance learning.

Academic Profile of the Participants

Based on the findings, the College of Criminal Justice (CCJ) was noted with the highest number of irregular students (31) who participated in the survey. They were enrolled under the Bachelor of Science in Criminology and the Bachelor of Science in Industrial Security Management programs. The College of Engineering and Information Technology (CEIT) was noted with 20 participants who were irregular students of the Bachelor of Science in Information Technology and the Bachelor of Science in Computer Science. The College of Sports, Physical Educations and Recreation (CSPEAR) had 17 irregular students who were enrolled in the Bachelor of Physical Education and the Bachelor of Exercise and Sports Sciences and Recreational Management. Meanwhile, the College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences (CVMBS) had 16 irreg-

ular students from Doctor of Veterinary Medicine who participated in the survey. The College of Economics, Management, and Development Studies (CEMDS) had 12 from the Bachelor of Science in Economics, Bachelor of Science in Business Management, and Bachelor of Science in Development Management. The College of Education (CEd) which offers Bachelor of Tourism Management and Diploma in Hotel and Restaurant Management; the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) offering BA Political Science and BS Psychology; the College of Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Resources (CAFNR) which offers BS Agriculture and BS Food Technology, and the College of Nursing (CoN) where BS Nursing and Midwifery are being offered had 11, 3, 7, and 2 participants, respectively. Eighty-seven of them took Purposive Communication and 32 took World Literature. Overall, 119 participants who were irregular students in their English courses responded to the survey.

Table 1. Academic profile of the participants

COLLEGE	ACADEMIC PROGRAM	NUMBER OF IRREGULAR STUDENTS
CAFENR	BS Agriculture	7
	BS Food Technology	
CAS	BA Political Science	3
	BS Psychology	
CCJ	BS Criminology	31
	BS Industrial Security Management	
CEMDS	BS Economics	12
	BS Business Management	
	BS Development Management	
CED	Bachelor of Tourism Management	11
	Diploma in Hotel and Restaurant Management	
CEIT	BS Computer Science	20
	BS Information Technology	
CSPEAR	Bachelor of Physical Education	17
	Bachelor of Exercise and Sports Sciences and Recreational Management	
CVMBS	Doctor of Veterinary Medicine	16
CON	BS Nursing and Midwifery	2
TOTAL		119

Common Communication Barriers in English Encountered by Irregular Students in Distance Learning

Table 2 presents the common examples of communication barriers encountered by the irregular students in English courses of the Cavite State University - Main Campus in distance learning. From the 119 participants of this study, a total of 380 responses were obtained. Most of the participants provided multiple responses.

Results revealed that unstable internet or data connectivity ranked first (13.95 %). This means that the most common barrier experienced by the students is a slow internet connection affecting their online education which belongs to physical and technical barriers to communication. Second in rank was being uneasy during class recitation which is a psychological barrier (9.74%), which implies that students are feeling uncomfortable or anxious in participating during class recitations and activities. They are anxious about participating during online classes due to several reasons. They may possibly be attending their classes at home where there is no privacy; hence, the environment becomes less conducive to learning. Health issues cannot be neglected as the learners and their family members were noted to be much affected by the pandemic. Other psychological barriers that were mentioned include lack of motivation and time to

study, and development of anxiety due to increasing amounts of academic tasks. Sudden disconnection from an ongoing virtual class and a lack of motivation to spend enough time studying ranked 3.5 (9.21%), which suggests that students are experiencing disinterest in studying due to these difficulties. This mainly happens when learners depend on mobile data alone or WIFI connection from their relatives residing near their homes. Financial issues due to loss of jobs make their education through distance learning a bit more difficult; hence, they find it uncomfortable to stay in their virtual classrooms or work on their asynchronous tasks. Moreover, inability to build connections with other students in a group task which is a collaboration barrier was also noted. Difficulty to understand the accent of the speakers which is a contextual barrier was also identified in this study. Other barriers are presented in the table below.

Since most of the participants encountered physical and technical barriers, the learning environment becomes less conducive to what needs to be achieved in every class. Similarly, Manlapaz (2020) mentioned that aside from poor internet connectivity and power interruptions add in the difficulty of making homes conducive for distance learning.

Table 2. Frequency and percentage distribution of the common communication barriers

COMMUNICATION BARRIER	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)	RANK
Unstable internet or data connectivity	53	13.95	1
Feeling uneasy during class recitation	37	9.74	2
Sudden disconnection from an ongoing virtual class	35	9.21	3.5
Lack of motivation and time to study	35	9.21	3.5
inability to concentrate in class because of work	31	8.16	5
Development of anxiety due to increasing amounts of academic tasks	30	7.89	6
Inability to build connections with other students	28	7.37	7

Table 2 continued.

COMMUNICATION BARRIER	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)	RANK
Lack of sufficient information about the subject	26	6.84	8
Audio drawbacks caused by poor internet connection	23	6.05	9
Overfatigue leading to less engagement in academic activities.	19	5.00	10
Lack of enough time to complete the academic tasks	17	4.47	11
Inability to collaborate with other students in a group task	16	4.21	12
Lack of necessary module in the subject	10	2.63	13
Difficulty to understand the accent of the speakers	9	2.37	14
Unavailable English dictionary	7	1.84	15
Lack of appropriate classroom	4	1.05	16
TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONSES	380	100	

Berge (2013) cited that physical and technical barriers which include atmosphere, distance, subject type, and duration-related problems usually occur in online learning. Other examples of these barriers include freezing screens, sound disturbances, and echoes. He further mentioned in his study that along with accessibility and technical concerns with the delivery systems, personal issues were particularly noticeable due to the early absence of experienced online teachers and student background characteristics.

Similarly, Coronel (2020) mentioned that emotional stress brought by the COVID-19 pandemic led learners to have less motivation to learn. This further leads to poor time management and less class participation. Most of the students become anxious about participating in class discussions in virtual classrooms due to several health issues faced by their family members. Likewise, both teachers and learners find some physical effects of the internet on their bodies. Too much exposure to the screens/monitors leads them to suffer from eye strain, headache, and other illnesses.

These challenges in communication and learning could impact the way irregular students face distance education.

Most Common Types of Communication Barriers Encountered by the Participants

Table 3 presents the types of communication barriers encountered by the participants in their English courses at Cavite State University-Main Campus in distance learning. These types include physical and technical, psychological, collaboration, temporal, cultural/social, and contextual barriers.

The barriers were identified and classified based on Berge (2013). Results showed that physical and technical barriers were the most common type of barriers encountered by the participants (40.79%) which include unstable internet or data connectivity, unavailable English dictionary at home, lack of necessary module in the subject and lack of appropriate classroom, and sudden disconnection of the participants from an ongoing

virtual class. These barriers were followed by the psychological barriers (30.26%) such as inability of the learners to concentrate in class due to work, overfatigue, development of anxiety due to academic tasks, and feeling uneasy during class recitation. Meanwhile, collaboration barriers were noted third in rank (17.89 %). These include inability to build connections with other students. Temporal barriers which include lack of time to complete the academic tasks ranked fourth (4.47%). Cultural and social barriers that include inability to deal with group tasks with other students coming from other geographical location ranked fifth (4.21%). Contextual barriers were found the least among the types (2.37%) that include inability to understand the accent of the facilitator and the meaning/details of the topic.

Since various local government units have not yet established stable internet connectivity in most of the local areas, learners and even teachers face several technical issues. Those living in remote areas find it difficult to listen to the facilitators via online mode. Proximity to the central/capital of each municipality/city is then considered an advantage due to fast internet speed/connectivity made available for business owners and other kinds of workers. Most of the irregular learners living in the cities, central areas, or those located near the industrial belt have chances of participat-

ing and submitting outputs on time as internet connectivity is deemed faster compared to distant areas since businesses found in those areas should be sustained. In addition, some of the irregular students work for their families and this leads them to divide their time between attending/joining classes and working at the same time. The tendency is that they get inside their virtual classrooms late; thus, become ashamed of participating in the discussion. Others ask permission to leave early than their schedules because of the demands from their work. Moreover, irregular students find it problematic to cope with the demands in the academe since some of them are not familiar with their classmates who are regular students under other programs. Differences in the academic programs where they belong lead the participants to be hesitant of making inquiries, suggestions, and other necessary actions towards the completion of their course requirements.

Similarly, based on Burgos (2020), home-based internet connections that are unstable due to geographical location or greater volume of users in a specific locality led to less productive outcomes in education. These, along with other physical and technical barriers such as power outage and noise around the place where online classes are held, affect learning among learners.

Table 3. Frequency and percentage distribution of the types of communication barriers encountered by the irregular students in English courses in distance learning

COMMUNICATION BARRIER	TYPE OF COMMUNICATION BARRIER	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)	RANK
Unstable internet or data connectivity				
Unavailable English dictionary				
Lack of necessary module in the subject and lack of appropriate classroom	Physical and Technical	155	40.79	1
Sudden disconnection from an ongoing virtual class				

Table 3 continued.

COMMUNICATION BARRIER	TYPE OF COMMUNICATION BARRIER	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)	RANK
Inability to concentrate in class due to work Overfatigue	Psychological	115	30.26	2
Development of anxiety due to academic-tasks				
Feeling uneasy during class recitation	Collaboration	68	17.89	3
Inability to build connections with other students				
Lack of time to complete the academic assignments	Temporal	17	4.47	4
Inability to deal with group tasks with other students coming from other geographical location	Cultural / Social	16	4.21	5
Inability to understand the accent of facilitator and the meaning/details about the topic	Contextual	9	2.37	6
TOTAL		380	100	

As mentioned by Arnaiz, S. et al. (2023), it is vital for educators to be aware of these barriers; hence they can make modifications and enhancements that may eradicate them to provide inclusive solutions to students.

All these restrictions caused by communication barriers lead to less effective communication in the educational setting. To achieve successful communication, people must collect nonverbal and vocal reactions and all activities simultaneously. As a result, establishing an efficient remote education system is dependent on removing communicational hurdles. For an institution to perform well while in distance education, Dawn and Laure (2021) said that teachers must be familiar with and capable of using certain teaching concepts in order to perform their responsibilities in distance learning. They may establish working groups that provide additional financial assistance and access to recording studios and equipment for schools and teachers; provide appropriate training programs for teachers that would equip them to become effective facilitators in distance education

and develop and sustain public-private partnerships in education. Moreover, Naidu (2023) noted that since most institutions are exposed to some form of online and distance learning to continue with their educational objectives during the pandemic, more reengineering efforts that may assist all stakeholders of educational institutions should be considered.

Significant Differences on the Communication Barriers Encountered by the Irregular Students based on the college where they belong

Table 4 presents the significant differences on the communication barriers encountered by the participants after grouping them according to the college where they belong.

As noted, irregular students from the College of Criminal Justice (CCJ) gave the highest mean of 3.58 with a standard deviation of 1.03. This implies that irregular students coming from CCJ encountered several communication barriers over other colleges. The College of Engineering and

Information Technology (CEIT) ranked next, with a mean of 3.33 and a standard deviation of 0.64. It was then followed by the College of Sports, Physical Education, and Recreation (CSPEAR) with a mean of 3.31 and a standard deviation of 0.69. With a computed p-value of 0.8446 which is higher than the critical p-value of 0.05; the null hypothesis that there are no significant differences on the communication barriers encountered by the participants per college was accepted.

The findings showed that irregular students from different academic specializations, coming from different colleges, had quite similar experiences while learning English through distance learning. If the teachers do not have enough knowledge on

the use of learning tools such as the Learning management System (LMS), learning material such as the Google Classroom, Google Forms, and are not capable of making instructional films, it will be problematic to the end of the students, particularly, the irregular students, to easily cope with their academic demands.

Findings adhere to Dawn and Laure (2021) who mentioned that different students coming from various academic programs experience lack of human resources readiness, a lack of clear directions from the local government, and limited facilities and infrastructure, depending on their geographical locations. Students who cannot easily comprehend the content of the material presented

Table 4. Differences on the communication barriers encountered by the participants based on the college where they belong

COLLEGE	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	CRITICAL P-VALUE	COMPUTED P-VALUE	DECISION
CAFENR	3.25	0.67			
CAS	3.15	0.97			
CCJ	3.58	1.03			
CEMDS	3.06	1.12			
CED	3.10	0.65			
CEIT	3.33	0.64	0.05	0.8446	Accept H0
CSPEAR	3.31	0.69			
CVMBS	3.06	0.71			
CON	2.93	0.00			
Total	3.23	0.81			

Legend

- 1.01 - 1.80 Very Low
- 1.81 - 2.60 Low
- 2.61 - 3.40 Moderately High
- 3.41 - 4.20 High
- 4.21 - 5.00 Very High

by the teacher via online media, disrupted internet networks, and a lack of use of online learning media, may lead to communication problems between the facilitators and the students.

Ways on How Irregular Students in English Courses of the CvSU-Main Campus Cope with the Communication Barriers in Distance Learning

Based on the findings, irregular students mentioned that collaboration, contextual, cultural/social, physical, psychological, technical, and temporal barriers are present in studying English courses in distance learning. They found it difficult to cope with their English courses because most of the students experienced poor and unstable internet connection, sudden loss of internet, noises in their surroundings, distracted to the other responsibilities at home or work, and socially conscious or hesitant in speaking in online classes.

Some of the ways by which they coped with the communication barriers in distance learning include: allotting enough time for their studies; easily adapting to changes; ensuring proper time management, and developing patience, diligence, and resourcefulness; and having a positive mindset. Most of them mentioned that they always tell themselves that their studies are very important; hence, they need to finish their degrees despite some unavoidable circumstances.

One of them responded:

“I am still motivated to continue with my studies because I have my family. My parents depend on me for our basic needs.”

Another irregular student said:

“I do cope with my studies through constant prayers.”

In addition, another participant mentioned:

“As an irregular student, I should always be a positive thinker. I need to focus on the brighter

side of my everyday experiences.”

It is indeed important to consider how irregular learners cope with their academic demands despite the COVID-19 pandemic. Dennen (2005) as cited in Anjum, Bhatti, and Iqbal (2020) noted that most of the time in remote education, teachers, and students are long-distance apart and these geographical differences greatly present difficulties. Students may experience sadness, isolation, and discomfort due to these restrictions. But still, they try coping with their academic tasks to pursue their degrees. With these, he mentioned that timely feedback to the distance learners that may enhance the teaching learning process should be done. There is also a need for a provision of internet facilities and teacher's training courses to use technological devices that may be arranged to overcome these barriers. More group interaction through tutorials may enhance the distance learner performance. Thus, identifying how irregular students dealt with these barriers was a vital part of this study.

CONCLUSIONS

Communication barriers are evident in distance learning. These difficulties frequently overlap, adding to the difficulty and struggle of students. In light of the findings, the following conclusions are presented:

Physical and technical barriers, psychological barriers, and collaboration barriers are common to students in distance learning. With these, a large gap between the students and their learning occurs which further affects the connection between them and the teachers. These barriers mainly happen during the time of the pandemic that students find difficulties while interacting with their mentors and their peers. Due to the huge impact of the COVID-19 pandemic which has affected many lives, students turn into better ways to survive. Some tend to seek for more jobs while studying which has greatly affected their academic growth.

Learners coming from different colleges with different academic specializations experience common problems in English-related courses while

studying via distance mode. The year 2021 has made huge problems in health, education, business and economy, and other aspects of the society. The internet connectivity in different local areas poses a great problem to those at work and the students in the academe. The Philippine government, while searching for better ways to help each other, is seen to be less capable of providing all the needs of the people who lost their jobs. It is with this reason that young learners suffer in distance learning.

It is indeed important to know that despite the communication barriers experienced by the CvSU irregular students, they have their own coping mechanisms that they use in dealing with the unavoidable circumstances in distance learning. Students are then considered adaptable to changes, patient, diligent, resourceful, and optimistic despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

RECOMMENDATIONS

With the findings on the communication barriers in English encountered by irregular students of the Cavite State University-Main Campus in distance learning, the following recommendations are hereby presented:

Findings could possibly be used in future research studies requiring data on the issues faced by learners of CvSU; hence, could be utilized in the preparation of more appropriate learning materials and learning modalities.

This research may also serve as a reference material in the preparation of other research-related activities involving all the students enrolled not only in CvSU but also in other universities. Other extracurricular activities of the students may also be considered with the findings given in this study.

The school administrators and curriculum planners may consider various policies that would address the issues in distance education. Schools may take the lead in facilitating collaborative efforts among students to minimize communication barriers through provision of stable

internet connection inside the campus, possible provision of gadgets, and other forms of assistance to the students who are studying in distance learning. Problems may be echoed to the policy makers in education to create points that may help the learners coming from different local areas to effectively deal with their academics tasks.

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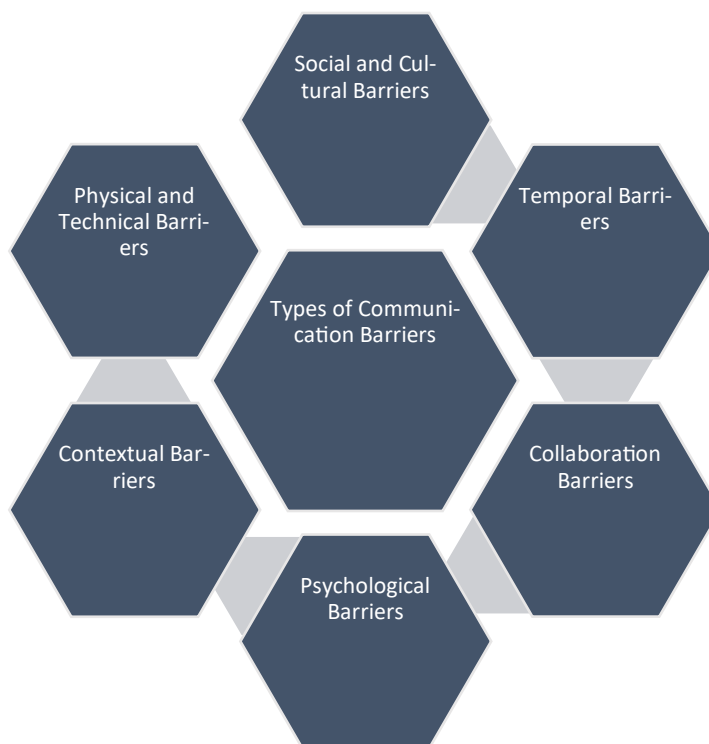
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Appendix 1. Types of communication barriers by Berge (2013)